

Appendix A. Arlington Open Space Committee Annual Reports

Open Space Committee 2004 Annual Report

The Open Space Committee (OSC) was established by Town Meeting in 1996. Members include concerned citizens and representatives of key Town entities (including the Park and Recreation Commission, Conservation Commission, Cemetery Commission, Redevelopment Board, and the Departments of Planning and Community Development, Public Works, and Human Services). The committee has met regularly over the past nine years to exchange ideas and discuss ways to protect the Town's open space resources.

The committee serves an oversight function but does not have direct management responsibility for Town properties. Its primary purpose is to enhance communication and coordination among those entities that do have management authority. In addition, the OSC seeks to raise broad-based community concerns and to advocate for the planning, stewardship and appropriate uses of the Town's open spaces.

Open Space Plan: One of the committee's main responsibilities is to prepare the Town's official Open Space and Recreation Plan every five years and to constantly monitor and document its provisions. The current plan, for 2002–2007, was approved in April 2003 by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA) Division of Conservation Services. The final published plan was presented to the Board of Selectmen and Town Meeting in May 2003. Copies are available for reading in the Robbins Library, Planning Department, Town Clerk's office, and certain other Town offices. The entire plan, including numerous maps and photographs, is available on the Town Web site (http://www.town.arlington.ma.us/Public_Documents/ArlingtonMA_BComm/OpenSpacePlan).

Site Management Plans: The committee's primary focus for this year was to prepare specific site management plans, as outlined in the Open Space Plan. The following sites were chosen for the first set of ten plans: Arlington Reservoir; Minuteman Bikeway; Arlington's Great Meadows; Robbins Farm Park; Spy Pond Park; Menotomy Rocks Park; Mt. Pleasant Cemetery; Meadowbrook Park; McClennen Park; and the Town Hall Gardens. Other sites will be documented in future years.

Committee members prepared these management plans in collaboration with representatives of various Town departments and commissions and volunteer groups that manage or monitor each site. A standardized template permits each site to be documented in a consistent manner. The template includes such information as the site location, size, boundaries, history, ownership, management entities, Friends groups, natural resources, basic maintenance and capital improvement needs, and financial considerations. The plans provide a record of current practices and also serve to facilitate communication among the interested parties. The plans will be incorporated into the next edition of the Open Space Plan and will be available for regular updating by the relevant Town departments and Friends groups.

Symmes Redevelopment Project: The OSC with Brian Rehrig, its representative on the Symmes Advisory Committee, continued to monitor and offer advice on open space and public access concerns during the redevelopment planning process. Several OSC memos addressed such recommendations as preserving the Summer Street woods and buffer areas and constructing a one-acre "vista park" at the top of the hill, both of which were incorporated into the final development plan approved by Town Meeting in May 2004. The committee will continue to provide oversight and input into the planning and implementation of the redevelopment plan, in particular the conservation restriction (CR) that will provide permanent protection to the open space portions of the site. The legal responsibility for

monitoring and enforcing the CR will be held jointly by the Arlington Conservation Commission and the Arlington Land Trust.

Town Events: The OSC again participated in Town Day in September, and for the first time had an information table at the Alternative Transportation Festival sponsored by the Arlington Bicycle Advisory Committee in May. Among the display materials and handouts at both events were maps identifying local open spaces, copies of the Open Space Plan, flyers about the Conservation Commission's Land Stewards Program, and a sign-up sheet for residents interested in getting more involved. At Town Day the committee sponsored a raffle of a donated dogwood tree to raise funds for special projects.

Other Activities: The OSC continued to monitor a wide range of open space concerns that affect the Town and its residents' quality of life. Some of the issues that came before the committee during the past year were residential and commercial encroachments on the Minuteman Bikeway; recognition of the need to plan for additional cemetery space and new columbarium facilities; and discussion of temporary signage at selected athletic fields (a proposal that was subsequently defeated by Town Meeting). Several committee members participated in initiatives led by the Green Streets organization to control invasive vegetation and introduce native plant species along the Bikeway. The group also organized the rescue and relocation of plants in traffic islands along Summer Street that would be destroyed during street construction.

The committee remained vigilant about opportunities to acquire and protect the few remaining undeveloped parcels in Town, as prioritized in the Open Space Plan. In late 2004 committee members addressed the Board of Selectmen/Board of Survey concerning a proposed new road and subdivision at Knowles Farm, a historic property that is documented in the Plan. Although the committee was not able to stop the development, this public testimony demonstrated the committee's commitment to disseminate information and increase awareness about broader zoning and subdivision concerns, loss of open space, and the role that the Open Space Plan should play in guiding future land uses in Town.

Goals for 2005: During 2005 the committee will continue to collaborate with other Town entities and community groups to advocate for the maintenance and management of the Town's valuable open space and recreation resources, in accordance with the goals and priorities outlined in the 2002–2007 Open Space and Recreation Plan. The committee will complete and implement the first round of site management plans and will identify a second group of sites. Other areas of special attention will be the Symmes redevelopment plan and conservation restriction, the Reservoir dam project, the completion and dedication of McClenen Park, and investigation of possible scenarios to protect the Mugar land.

Open Space Committee Members (as of December 2004)

Roland Chaput (Redevelopment Board)

Teresa DeBenedictis (Department of Public Works)

Joey Glushko (Planning and Community Development Department)

Michele Hessler (Cemetery Commission)

Elizabeth Karpati (Vision 2020)

Patsy Kraemer (Department of Human Services)

Ann LeRoyer (citizen), Chair

Leslie Mayer (Park and Recreation Commission)

Adam Pachter (citizen)

David White (Conservation Commission), Vice Chair

Submitted January 12, 2005

Open Space Committee

2005 Annual Report

The Open Space Committee (OSC) was established by Town Meeting in 1996. Members include concerned citizens and representatives of key Town entities (including the Park and Recreation Commission, Conservation Commission, Cemetery Commission, Redevelopment Board, and the Departments of Planning and Community Development, Public Works, and Human Services). The committee has met regularly over the past ten years to exchange ideas and discuss ways to protect the Town's open space resources.

The committee serves an oversight function but does not have direct management responsibility for Town properties. Its primary purpose is to enhance communication and coordination among those entities that do have management authority. In addition, the OSC seeks to raise broad-based community concerns and to advocate for the planning, stewardship, and appropriate uses of the Town's open spaces.

Open Space Plan: One of the committee's main responsibilities is to prepare the Town's official Open Space and Recreation Plan every five years and to constantly monitor and document its provisions and goals. The current plan, for 2002–2007, was approved in April 2003 by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA) Division of Conservation Services. The final published plan was presented to the Board of Selectmen and Town Meeting in May 2003. Copies are available for reading in the Robbins Library, Planning Department, Town Clerk's office, and certain other Town offices. The entire plan, including numerous maps and photographs, is available on the Town Web site (http://www.town.arlington.ma.us/Public_Documents/ArlingtonMA_BComm/OpenSpace_Folder/OpenSpacePlan)

Site Management Plans: The committee's primary focus for this year was to prepare specific site management plans, as outlined in the Open Space Plan. The following sites were chosen for the first set of plans: Arlington Reservoir; Minuteman Bikeway; Arlington's Great Meadows; Robbins Farm Park; Spy Pond Park and the Route 2 Path next to Spy Pond; Menotomy Rocks Park; Mt. Pleasant Cemetery; Meadowbrook Park; McClenen Park; and the Town Hall Gardens and Old Burying Ground. Other sites will be documented in future years.

Committee members prepared these management plans in collaboration with representatives of various Town departments and commissions and volunteer groups that manage or monitor each site. A standardized template permits each site to be documented in a consistent manner. The template includes such information as the site location, size, boundaries, history, ownership, management entities, Friends groups, natural resources, basic maintenance and capital improvement needs, and financial considerations. The plans provide a record of current practices and also serve to facilitate communication among the interested parties. The plans will be incorporated into the next edition of the Open Space Plan and will be available for regular updating by the relevant Town departments and Friends groups.

Town Events: The OSC again participated in Town Day in September 2005. Among the display materials and handouts were maps identifying local open spaces, information about the Open Space Plan, flyers about the Conservation Commission's Land Stewards Program, and a sign-up sheet for residents interested in getting more involved. The committee sponsored the sale of daffodil and crocus bulbs salvaged from the Symmes site to raise funds for special projects. Unsold bulbs were donated to the Reservoir Committee for planting in a visible area near the new dam pathway.

Other Activities: The OSC continued to monitor a wide range of open space concerns that affect the Town and its residents' quality of life. Some of the issues that came before the committee for discussion during the past year were residential and commercial encroachments on the Minuteman Bikeway; a proposed change to the Town bylaw regarding the Open Space Zone, which would invoke the ARB or ZBA special permit process to determine if parking creation or expansion is acceptable for land in that zone; a proposal to establish a dog park on Town property; and curfew schedules at Town parks. The committee also remains vigilant about opportunities to acquire and protect the few remaining undeveloped parcels in Town, as prioritized in the Open Space Plan.

Goals for 2006: During 2006 the committee will continue to collaborate with other Town entities and community groups to advocate for the maintenance and management of the Town's valuable open space and recreation resources, in accordance with the goals and priorities outlined in current Open Space and Recreation Plan. Having completed the first round of site management plans, the committee will begin the extensive task of updating the entire Plan, which must be completed by the summer of 2007.

In addition, the committee will continue to provide input into the planning and implementation of the Symmes redevelopment plan, in particular the conservation restriction (CR) that will provide permanent protection for the open space portions of the site. Other areas of attention will be the Reservoir dam project, possible scenarios to protect the Mugar land, and ongoing policy discussions about the use of existing Town parks and open spaces.

Open Space Committee Members (as of January 2006)

Roland Chaput (Redevelopment Board)

Teresa DeBenedictis (Department of Public Works)

Joey Glushko (Planning and Community Development Department)

Michele Hessler (Cemetery Commission)

Elizabeth Karpati (Vision 2020)

Patsy Kraemer (Department of Human Services)

Ann LeRoyer (citizen), Chair

Leslie Mayer (Park and Recreation Commission)

Adam Pachter (citizen)

David White (Conservation Commission), Vice Chair

Submitted January 13, 2006

Open Space Committee

2006 Annual Report

The Open Space Committee (OSC) was established by Town Meeting ten years ago in 1996. Members include concerned citizens and representatives of key Town entities (see list of members). The committee meets monthly to exchange ideas and discuss ways to protect and maintain the Town's open space resources. The committee serves an oversight function but does not have direct management responsibility for Town properties. Its primary purpose is to enhance communication and coordination among those entities that do have management authority. In addition, the OSC seeks to raise broad-based community concerns and to advocate for the protection, stewardship, and appropriate uses of the Town's open spaces.

Open Space Plan: The committee's main responsibility is to prepare the Town's official Open Space and Recreation Plan every five years, and to constantly monitor and document its provisions and goals. The current plan, for 2002–2007, was approved in April 2003 by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA) Division of Conservation Services. Copies are available in the Robbins Library, Planning Department, Town Clerk's office, and certain other Town offices. The entire plan, including numerous maps and photographs, is available on the Town Web site (http://www.town.arlington.ma.us/Public_Documents/ArlingtonMA_BComm/OpenSpace_Folder/OpenSpacePlan).

In anticipation of needing to update the plan during 2006 and 2007, the committee submitted an application for Community Development Block Grant funds of \$15,000 to hire consultants to help with preparation of the new plan for 2007–2012. Town Meeting in the spring of 2006 approved the request, and later in the year OSC prepared a Request for Proposals. Nine proposals were received, and in November the committee selected Ralph Willmer of VHB in Watertown to spearhead the public participation process and to help the committee prepare the final report to the Town and the state. Willmer is an Arlington resident who has extensive experience as a planner, and in particular has worked with the state and many other communities on open space planning.

Another element that will contribute to assessing resident concerns about open space and recreation issues is the Vision 2020 survey that accompanies the annual Town Census mailing. The January 2007 survey was developed during the summer and fall of 2006 in conjunction with the Open Space Committee, in order to incorporate questions that will help the committee gather community input for future open space goals and objectives.

Site Management Plans: The committee completed work on site management plans for 12 major open space and recreation sites, as outlined in the Open Space Plan: Arlington Reservoir; Minuteman Bikeway; Arlington's Great Meadows; Robbins Farm Park; Spy Pond Park and the Route 2 Path next to Spy Pond; Menotomy Rocks Park; Mt. Pleasant Cemetery; Meadowbrook Park; McClenen Park; and the Town Hall Gardens and Old Burying Ground. Committee members prepared these management plans in collaboration with representatives of various Town departments and commissions and volunteer groups that manage or monitor each site. A standardized template permits each site to be documented in a consistent manner. The template includes such information as the site location, size, boundaries, history, ownership, management entities, Friends groups, natural resources, basic maintenance and capital improvement needs, and financial considerations. The plans provide a record of current practices and also serve to facilitate communication among the interested parties. The plans will be incorporated into the 2007–2012 Open Space Plan and will be available for regular updating by the relevant Town departments and Friends groups.

Other Activities: The OSC participated in Town Day in September 2006, displaying maps of local open spaces, information about the Open Space Plan, flyers about the Conservation Commission's

Land Stewards Program, and a sign-up sheet for residents interested in getting more involved. The OSC continued to monitor a wide range of open space concerns that affect the Town and its residents' quality of life. Some of the issues that came before the committee for discussion during the year were a proposal for affordable housing on Town-owned land on Pond Lane; a meeting with representatives of many parks and playgrounds concerning management policies and maintenance issues; ongoing discussion about the pros and cons of a dog park and policies for off-leash times and locations; efforts to enhance the landscape and access to Window on the Mystic, a Conservation Commission property along Upper Mystic Lake; and Arlington's participation in the Heritage Landscapes and Freedom's Way initiative of the state Department of Conservation and Recreation.

Goals for 2007: During 2007 the committee will focus most of its work on updating the Open Space Plan and working with the Planning Department on its Smart Growth Technical Assistance grant to develop a long-term planning and development vision for the Town. The committee will continue to collaborate with other Town entities and community groups to advocate for the proper maintenance and management of the Town's valuable open space and recreation resources. In particular, the committee will provide input into the planning and implementation of the Symmes redevelopment plan and the conservation restriction (CR) that will provide permanent protection for the open space portions of the site. Other areas of attention continue to be Elizabeth Island and the Mugar land, both significant privately owned natural resources that are priorities for acquisition for conservation purposes.

Open Space Committee Members (as of January 2007)

Teresa DeBenedictis (Department of Public Works)
Lisa Decker (Redevelopment Board)
Joey Glushko (Planning and Community Development Department)
Michele Hassler (Cemetery Commission)
Elizabeth Karpati (Vision 2020)
Patsy Kraemer (Department of Human Services)
Ann LeRoyer (citizen), Chair
Leslie Mayer (Park and Recreation Commission)
Adam Pachter (citizen)
David White (Conservation Commission), Vice Chair

Submitted January 15, 2007